

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 236 746

CS 504 447

AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
 TITLE Listening and the Pupil.
 PUB DATE [79]
 NOTE 18p.
 PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
 -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Communication; Classroom Environment;
 Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary
 Education; Learning Centers (Classroom); Learning
 Modalities; Learning Processes; Listening
 Comprehension; Listening Habits; *Listening Skills;
 *Speech Communication; *Student Motivation; *Teaching
 Methods

ABSTRACT

To help students develop needed skills in listening, teachers need to (1) encourage improved listening through interesting learning activities, (2) involve students in presenting ideas as well as listening to content, (3) vary kinds of learning experiences, (4) provide direct training in listening skills, (5) recognize differences in students' academic ability and background experience, and (6) create a stimulating environment to promote active listening. In addition to creating discussion or listening centers, audiovisual stations, and oral reading and storytelling centers, teachers can stress the importance of good listening skills by practicing and encouraging good speaking and listening habits in all classroom activities. The methods that teachers choose to promote listening skills depend on their objectives, which can focus on student skills, such as recalling main ideas, or on affective experiences, such as developing respect for other students. (MM)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

LISTENING AND THE PUPIL

Marlow Ediger

Listening carefully to ideas expressed orally by others is important.

This is important for a number of reasons. Respect for other individuals and their thinking is then revealed. It is a way or means of developing new learnings. Feelings of belonging may be achieved when interacting with other human beings; listening is important in the process.

There are many situations in life in which careful listening is important. The following, among others, represent some of these situations:

1. conversing with others.
2. participating in a discussion.
3. interviewing visitors and guests.
4. making introductions.
5. participating in a dramatization.

answering questions raised by others.

7. listening to a lecture or explanation.
8. listening to musical recordings.
9. responding to sounds in the environment pertaining to one's safety.
10. reacting proficiently to sounds in the environment requiring selected responses.

Diverse levels of listening are the lot of pupils on an individual basis.

1. Hearing sounds of words but not reacting to the ideas expressed: a mother knows that Daryl is speaking.
2. Intermittent listening--turning the speaker on and off: hearing one idea in a sermon but none of the rest of it.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Marlow Ediger

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.

3. Half listening--following the discussion only well enough to find an opportunity to express your own idea: listening to a conversation to find a place to tell how you handled a child.
4. Listening passively with little observable response: the child knows the teacher is telling him once again how to walk in the hall.
5. Narrow listening in which the main significance or emphasis is lost as the listener selects details that are familiar or agreeable to him: a good Democrat listening to a candidate from another party.
6. Listening and forming associations with related items from one's own experiences: a first-grade child hears the beginning sound of Sally, says, and said, and relates it to the letter s.
7. Listening to a report to get main ideas and supporting details or follow directions: listening to the rules and descriptions of a new spelling game.
8. Listening critically: a listener notices the emotional appeal of words in a radio advertisement.
9. Appreciative and creative listening with genuine mental and emotional response: a child listens to the teacher read Miracle on Maple Hill and shares the excitement of sugar making.¹

Principles of Learning Applied to Listening

The psychology of learning has much to offer in providing guidelines for an appropriate environment facilitating the development of listening skills. The teacher must follow recommended guidelines pertaining to teaching and learning which aid pupils in developing needed skills in listening.

1. Learning activities should be interesting to encourage improved listening on the part of pupils. Too frequently, experiences in the

¹Paul S. Anderson and Diane Lapp, Language Skills in Elementary Education, Third Edition. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1979, page 98.

classroom have been boring and result in poor listening.

Dawson, Zollinger, and Elwell² list the following appreciative listening activities, among others, which might well capture learner interests:

Oral reading will often be the background for responsive listening as the listeners (1) sketch an original cartoon of a character or situation portrayed in a story; (2) pantomime, activate puppets, or dramatize spontaneously in response to a story just listened to; (3) individually tell or write an original ending to a high-quality story; and (4) make sound effects with rhythm band instruments as the teacher reads a poem or story portraying different kinds of weather or rates of motion; for instance, as a character strolls, walks briskly, stumbles, lopes, pauses and walks softly, races, and leaps to safety.

Storytelling, too, gives opportunity for the children to learn to listen appreciatively and creatively; for instance, they (1) tell chain stories in which each participant carries on from where the preceding speaker stopped; (2) witness the first act of a play planned and presented by a committee, then spontaneously make up the next act; (3) listen for leads in prepared stories told by members of a special committee, these leads to suggest spontaneous stories on the part of the listeners; and, (4) for advanced pupils, keep notes of the ideas suggested by the poems and stories presented by the teacher or their classmates.

The teacher must know as much as possible about the interests of individual pupils. Learning activities related to unit titles may be based on pupils' interests. Thus, learners having hobbies such as collecting coins, stamps, rocks, pennants, and other items, can bring these to school pertaining to a unit on hobbies. As learners tell about their hobbies, skills pertaining to listening are involved. Pupils need to listen carefully to the presentation of others. They also must listen to questions of listeners pertaining to specific

²Mildred Dawson, Marian Zollinger, and Ardel Elwell, Guiding Language Learning, Second Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1963, page 163.

hobbies being presented.

The teacher then should attempt to select learning activities which stimulate learners in wanting to listen carefully to ideas being presented. Content discussed in films, filmstrips, slides, and other audio-visual materials on the understanding level of pupils can aid learners to become better listeners.

Problem solving activities may guide pupils to improve their listening vocabularies. Ideas are shared when pupils in committees identify problems, obtain needed information, and revise necessary hypotheses. Problem solving activities may generate much interest in learning on the part of pupils.

2. Teacher-pupil planning can aid learners in listening. Teaching very often has amounted to lecturing and explaining. Thus, a one-way street of communication is in evidence. Eventually, pupils may lack purpose in learning since there are few opportunities to ask questions in terms of what is valuable to pupils. Pupils, of course, must perceive reasons for learning.

Teacher-pupil planning means that learners participate in actively presenting ideas as well as listening to content. Pupils might then have a voice in determining what is to be learned as well as how the learning is to take place. They may also be involved in assessing their own achievement. Thus, pupils become participants in determining the elementary curriculum. The concerns of pupils should be in evidence in teaching-learning situations in the class setting. If the concerns of pupils become an important part of the elementary curriculum, purpose is then involved in learning.

3. Variety in learning experiences can help to develop needed skills in listening. Sameness in learning experiences generally forces listeners in turning off to ongoing learning activities. If improved listening is to take place within pupils, learning activities must be varied. —There are more kinds of experiences that can be provided for pupils than ever before. It behooves the teacher to select those which help pupils to listen more attentively.
4. Pupils must receive direct practice to achieve at an optimum rate in listening. Learnings that pupils have developed pertaining to listening should be applicable and transferable to new situations. The teacher needs to provide experiences for pupils where skills in listening can be developed. Developed skills must be relevant and useful. Thus, the teacher might have pupils listen to various sounds in the environment when taking an excursion on or near the school grounds. Learners may identify the sounds as to their source or origin. The teacher as well as pupils might record diverse sounds and have learners in the class setting identify their cause or causes. The teacher, also, could have learners put their heads on their desk and not see the source of sounds, while the teacher crumbles paper, pours water into a tumbler, and taps a pencil. Pupils can guess what made each of these sounds to occur. Hopefully, as a result of direct experiences pertaining to the identification of sounds, pupils will transfer learnings to new situations. Improved listening might then occur in the classroom setting.
5. The teacher must provide for individual differences in listening. Each child differs from others in many ways such as in height, weight,

energy level, health, capacity, and achievement. The teacher must make definite provisions for individual differences in the class setting. To be sure, selected pupils will be better listeners as compared to others. Two pupils may even be quite similar in capacity and achievement; however, one of these learners will comprehend content better in learning activities involving listening. When differences exist in capacity of two pupils, generally the pupil with the higher capacity should achieve better in listening activities, all things being equal.

The ability to comprehend well in learning activities involving listening may well depend upon factors such as the following:

- (a) background information of pupils.
 - (b) interest in the topic being presented.
 - (c) motivation of pupils in desiring to learn.
 - (d) content being presented on the understanding level of pupils.
 - (e) sequence of ideas being presented.
 - (f) methods used in presenting ideas.
 - (g) enthusiasm of the presenter of content.
 - (h) impression made by speaker on listeners.
 - (i) use of appropriate gestures, facial expressions, and body movements of the speaker.
6. The teacher must accept each pupil regardless of race, creed, or socioeconomic level. Pupils come to school representing diverse socioeconomic levels. The home situation may or may not have the following benefits educationally for pupils:
- (a) reading materials for pupils.

- (b) discussing content with children in a meaningful way.
- (c) having an atmosphere of empathy and respect.
- (d) children being involved in the making of decisions.
- (e) parents reading to themselves and thus setting a model for pupils.
- (f) parents taking pupils to visit places of importance such as museums, circuses, and other points of interest.
- (g) appropriate clothing for children.
- (h) nutritious meals for members of the family.
- (i) concern for health and safety of children.

The home situation must provide what is of benefit to children. However, as is well known and documented, selected pupils lack having needed experiences in the home which make for a sound educational background. Pupils may come to school lacking proper fitting and clean clothing. It may then be difficult for some teachers to accept these individuals as having worth. Each pupil must feel he/she is wanted and valued in the school setting for optimum achievement to take place. A child that feels he/she is not a part of the class will hardly achieve optimal development. All pupils must be accepted by the teacher; each child can then be guided to realize optimal development. This is true of the language arts area of listening as well as other curriculum areas.

7. Pupils should be actively involved in learning for the highest achievement in listening to occur. A passive receiver of information cannot achieve to his/her optimum in listening. Pupils need to have a stimulating environment in order that improved listening habits may result.

The teacher must emphasize proper balance among diverse learning activities to emphasize pupils growing in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This definitely means that the listening vocabulary should not be deemphasized. Too frequently, skills objectives in listening have not been stressed adequately in teaching-learning situations. The classroom teacher must stress the importance of having pupils achieve relevant objectives pertaining to listening. If learning centers are used in the classroom setting, the following might serve as a model:

- (a) a discussion center. Here, pupils could discuss a selected picture, from among others. The pictures should stimulate curiosity and involve learners in a lively discussion at the learning center. Active participation on the part of pupils is to be desired in learning experiences involving listening. At the discussion center, pupils could also discuss relevant issues in the current affairs program. Issues being discussed should provide for situations in which pupils have an inward desire to listen attentively.
- (b) an audio-visual station. Pupils in a committee could view selected filmstrips, films, and slides pertaining to ongoing units of study. Following the presentation, learners could discuss and present their findings to the total class. In the discussion, learners need to present ideas as well as listen to the thinking of others.
- (c) a listening center. Pupils may listen to cassette recordings of their choosing related to specific units being studied

presently. A task card could be an inherent part of the center. From the card, pupils individually may select sequential activities to complete. Each pupil might then be assessed in terms of having understood and gained ideas through listening when responding to selected questions on the task card.

- (3) oral reading and storytelling center. Here, pupils in a small group may listen to stories being read orally or to stories being told by learners or by the teacher. Careful listening is important in this teaching-learning situation. Hopefully, the stories read and told make for active involvement in listening.

Chambers and Lowry³ wrote:

Active listening is specialized listening. It is listening to receive special, important information. This is listening with a definite purpose. The conductor listens actively as he rehearses his orchestra. The physician listens actively through his stethoscope. The athlete listens actively to directions from his coach. Active listening implies readiness, listening for a special purpose. Children listen actively to a spelling list being read by a teacher, since after they hear a word on the list, they are required to write it on paper.

Active listening does not comprise most of the child's listening efforts. Often he does not know how or when to listen actively. He will usually need clues so that he can listen in an active way. A good teacher will provide these clues. She many times will have a device that will bring children's attention to her, so that they will be able to participate in active listening. Such a device as calling for attention and waiting until all eyes are toward her and quiet prevails is a common one. Preschool and kindergarten teachers many times will strike a chord on the piano or ring a special bell to bring children to attention so they will listen in an active manner.

It is probably wise also to tell children that they will

³Dewey Woods Chambers and Heath Ward Lowry, The Language Arts. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1975, pages 12 and 13.

receive directions or other information that is important to them. It is good to simply tell them that they need to listen carefully! What the teacher is actually doing is structuring their listening. They are told to listen carefully, and why they are to listen carefully. Sometimes it is necessary to present the information and/or directions more than once. After they have been given, many teachers will ask a student to repeat what they have heard, so that additional reinforcement is provided. Active listening is specialized listening. Teachers must realize that some children will not know how to listen in this way and will need help in learning this skill.

Passive listening describes that level of listening that does not require the attention, the concern for detail, or any specific requirements of active listening. This kind of listening is largely an unconscious process and contrasts with active listening, which is largely a conscious process. Passive listening is the kind of listening that one does as he listens to the radio, aware of the sound, but not paying great attention to it. One responds to classroom "hum" in a passive way, aware that it is present, but not consciously concerned with it. The everyday sounds of the world are heard in a passive way. They occur and pass with little attention from the listener. Only when the listener is given a clue that what he is hearing is of importance to him will this unconscious, passive listening become active and conscious.

Most of the youngster's listening (and the adult's, for that matter) is of a passive nature. He is aware of sound activity and accepts it passively. His environment teaches him to be actively aware of certain sounds for his protection or to satisfy needs. Other sounds will go relatively unattended.

Objectives in Listening

Dallmann⁴ lists the following do's and don'ts for teachers in the area of listening:

1. Speak in a pleasant voice, one to which the pupils can enjoy listening.

⁴Martha Dallmann, Teaching the Language Arts in the Elementary School. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1976, page 74.

2. Build upon the listening experiences that the child has had at home and/or in earlier years at school.
3. Remember that listening is more than hearing, and help the boys and girls to recognize the fact that attention to a speaker's words often requires thinking.
4. Encourage the listener not to be so absorbed in his own ideas about a point the speaker has mentioned during the course of his talk that he will not note subsequent points the speaker makes in the rest of his talk.
5. Be a good listener yourself. When a pupil or other person is speaking, show by your behavior that you are listening to the speaker. Some teachers spend much of the time that they should spend in listening by watching members of the audience. This is bad practice because boys and girls may develop the habit of not listening as they note the teacher's inattentive manner.
6. Guard against giving instructions such as "Let's all pay attention." Rather, indicate for what the pupils should be listening.
7. Avoid the practice, in which some teachers engage, of repeating directions or explanations unnecessarily. Otherwise the pupils may develop poor habits of listening, as they realize the teacher will most likely make his explanation more than once. Or the pupil may be bored by that which the teacher repeats. However, the teacher should be careful that he makes his points clear. At times, for example, after the teacher has given a direction of more than one step, a pupil may be asked to make application of it for demonstration purposes, to insure that the point is made clear to those who are listening.
8. Discourage interruptions of the speaker, even if he makes an error in speech or in facts presented or in deductions from facts he presents.
9. Don't encourage fake attention. The teacher might lead a discussion on the fact that merely looking intently at the speaker does not guarantee good listening. He can help the pupils to understand that a person looking intently at the speaker may sometimes feel justified in letting his mind wander rather than concentrating on what the speaker is saying.

Objectives for pupils to achieve in listening must be selected carefully.

Only relevant objectives should be stressed in teaching-learning situations

Following the selection of objectives, learning experiences must be selected for pupils. Ultimately, assessment must take place to determine if the objectives have been realized. If objectives have not been achieved, the teacher needs to determine causes. New or modified learning experiences may need to be selected so that pupils can achieve the stated objectives. Or, the original objective(s) may need to be omitted or stated at a less complex achievement level.

The following, among others, may be relevant objectives for pupils to achieve in listening:

1. to recall factual information, main ideas, generalizations, and summary statements.
2. to attach meaning to content presented by others.
3. to utilize learnings obtained within new situations such as in problem-solving activities.
4. to analyze content critically in terms of separating opinion from facts, inaccurate statements from accurate statements, and imaginary situations from situations involving reality.
5. to listen creatively with the intent of achieving new, unique, novel ideas.
6. to listen attentively to ongoing presentations.
7. to listen to ideas of others in an atmosphere of respect.
8. to desire to improve in the area of listening.
9. to diagnose one's own difficulties in listening and working toward remedying these deficiencies.
10. to listen proficiently to diverse types and kinds of oral presentations such as in conversations, discussions, interviews, and in the making of

introductions.

11. to develop adequate background information so that goals in listening can be realized to their optimum.
12. to evaluate ideas expressed by others in terms of desirable criteria.

The teacher also needs to have objectives which are relevant to use in teaching-learning situations. Thus, the teacher may emphasize the following objectives involving listening:

1. presenting content on the understanding level of pupils.
2. varying the kinds of learning activities to promote optimum pupil achievement in listening.
3. working in the direction of pupils enjoying ongoing learning activities to increase listening potential.
4. providing for individual differences among learners in listening.
5. valuing the worth of each learner so that an adequate self-concept may result.
6. helping pupils develop respect toward others.
7. developing a relaxed environment free from threats and tension.

Learning Experiences and Listening

Imagine you are in a vast convention hall filled with an immense display of the latest, brightest, and best educational materials: film strips, tapes, movies, magazines, workbooks, photographs, craft kits, cutouts, stencils, and textbooks. Except for these items spread in colorful array, the room is empty. Until one human being enters the scene, walks, stops, looks, and touches, all the materials are nothing but inert matter, just as the magician's props are nothing but objects until used by the individual who can change them into something wonderful.

Creative teachers can transform ordinary learning into a magical moment. They can translate routine lesson plans

into memorable experiences. They can present facts in such original ways that the facts fuse with other, deeper understandings and result in exciting discoveries for the student.⁵

A variety of learning experiences must be provided for pupils so that stated objectives in listening can be achieved.

The teacher may select and read interesting stories and library books to pupils. Periodically, stimulating questions might be asked of pupils pertaining to content read to evaluate achievement in listening. Questions asked should not hinder in developing improved skills in listening.

Pupils in committees may take turns reading selected stories to each other. The content of these stories can be discussed within the committee. The teacher then has opportunities to assess each pupil's achievement in listening.

The teacher, as well as pupils, might engage in the telling of stories. Pictures, objects, and charts may be used in the learning activity. Following the telling of stories, pupils with teacher guidance may discuss major generalizations achieved in the listening activity.

Selected intervals of time may be used to provide direct experiences for pupils in listening. Thus, pupils may tell of sounds heard presently in the class setting. Pupils could bring to class an object that would make a certain sound; listeners not seeing the object may guess the source of the sound. Learners individually might also make selected sounds without the use of objects. Other pupils, having their eyes closed and heads on their desks, may determine the cause of these sounds.

Pupils with teacher guidance may develop appropriate standards pertaining to listening. Periodically, pupils could evaluate their own personal achievement

⁵Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld, teaching language arts creatively. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1979, page 36.

in listening in terms of the agreed upon guidelines.

There are many kinds of learning activities to assist pupils in becoming better listeners. The activities must be interesting, purposeful, meaningful, and provide for individual differences. The following, among others, may provide experiences for pupils requiring skill in the area of listening:

1. discussing content read from reference sources.
2. evaluating the results of a science experiment.
3. planning a mural, frieze, or diorama within a committee.
4. making and evaluating relief maps, models, and toys relating to an ongoing social studies unit.
5. working cooperatively in solving a mathematics problem involving a new process.
6. assessing cooperatively in an atmosphere of respect, written or oral reports presented in reading.
7. planning well balanced meals in a unit on nutrition in the health curriculum.
8. assessing achievement in small groups toward achieving objectives in physical education, art, and music, as well as in other curriculum areas in the elementary school.

In Summary

It is important for teachers to follow important principles of learning when guiding pupils toward improved skills in listening. Objectives which pupils are to achieve in listening should be carefully selected and relevant from the learner's own unique perception. Experiences pertaining to listening should assist pupils to achieve desired objectives. How well pupils listen in

any given situation may depend upon the following:

1. the child's maturity level.
2. the child's general ability.
3. the child's interest in the topic at hand.
4. the child's previous experience with the material being presented.
5. the type of material being presented.
6. the listening "climate" created by the teacher.
7. the children's rapport with the teacher or the speaker.
8. the quality of the teaching.
9. the attitude and ability of the teacher (or speaker) to relate to the child.
10. the demands made on the child during the listening period.
11. the child's listening readiness.
12. the child's established listening habits.
13. the child's ability to adjust to any abnormal or unpredicted situation.
14. the physical-emotional tone of the room.
15. the child's acquired listening skills.
16. the adjustment of speed of reception with the speed of delivery.
17. the creative set to listen.
18. the child's general health and the social-emotional climate of his home.⁶

Questions for Thought and Consideration

1. Read several chapters on listening from diverse college and university level textbooks pertaining to the teaching of language arts in the elementary school.
 - (a) Which objectives in listening do writers emphasize most frequently?
 - (b) What are some important learning activities, according to these writers, which you could use in teaching-learning situations to aid pupil achievement in listening?
 - (c) According to these writers, how should pupil achievement in listening be evaluated?
2. Assume that you are developing a language arts curriculum guide pertaining

⁶James Smith, Adventures in Communication. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1972, page 137.

to the area of listening:

- (a) which objectives, do you think, should be an integral part of the guide?
- (b) which learning experiences, in your thinking, would best help pupils achieve the desired ends?
- (c) how should pupil achievement be assessed?

Selected References

1. Anderson, Paul S., and Diane Lapp. Language Skills in Elementary Education. Third Edition. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1979.
2. Applegate, Mauree. Easy in English. Elmsford, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960. Chapter Four.
3. Chambers, Dewey Woods, and Heath Ward Lowry. The Language Arts. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1975.
4. Chenfeld, Mimi Brodsky. teaching language arts creatively. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1979.
5. Dallman, Martha. Teaching the Language Arts in the Elementary School. Second Edition. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1976. Chapter Four.
6. Dawson, Mildred, Marian Zollinger, and Ardel Elwell. Guiding Language Learning. Second Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1963.
7. Dawson, Mildred A., and Frieda Hayes Dingee. Children Learn the Language Arts. Second Edition. Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1966. Chapter Five.
8. Ediger, Marlow. "Good Listening Habits a Must," The Oklahoma Teacher (February, 1968), 18-19.
9. Newman, Harold. Effective Language Arts Practices in the Elementary School: Selected Readings. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1972. Chapter Four.
10. Shane, Harold G., et al. Improving Language Arts Instruction in the Elementary School. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1962. Chapter Five.
11. Smith, James. Adventures in Communication. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1972.
12. Strickland, Ruth G. The Language Arts in the Elementary School. Second Edition. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1957. Chapter Six.